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Alumni News

Vladimir Kabelik — Oakville, Ontario, Canada



www.kabelik.com

Publication

Spotlight Vladimir Kabelik Article Contest Winner



"I believe that my photographs exist outside of time."

Fast File
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Former-based archival prints are available at 2024 or larger, with prices varying between \$100-\$2,000. Contact the photographer for more information.

Vladimir Kabelik portrait by George Havel

A simple and effective metaphor frames Vladimir Kabelik's photographs. First applied in the early 1980s, the concept also used with the photographer, who himself says in "A modestly sized studio full of gilded photographs, paintings, glass jewels, ceramic sculptures made by my wife and books" on the 18th floor of a building in Toronto with a sweeping view of Lake Ontario.

Despite having "reached the stage in life when people stop acquiring things," he has assembled and published copies of an object he hopes will endure. Vladimir Kabelik: PHOTOGRAPHY, a 136-page monograph self-published in 2016, contains the photographs printed here along with reflective, sometimes tingling text. The book is an autobiographical survey, compiled by a man born in 1951 in what was then Czechoslovakia. After discovering photography as a boy and earning a Master of Arts degree from the Academy of Film and Television Arts of FAMU in Prague, he was active in the city's vibrant film, media and photography communities, winning awards and exhibiting regularly.

But in 1981 Kabelik, his wife and their soon-to-be son Josef Sudek left Prague and emigrated from Czechoslovakia after the secret police interrogated him because of his contacts with anti-communist dissidents. It was clearly, bitterly, time to go. After stopovers in Austria and Switzerland, the family set in Canada in 1982. Kabelik continued to pursue photography and documentary filmmaking and expanded his understanding of the relationship between the mediums. "Filmmaking is an intellectual exercise that involves a structured story, motion and people. Photography is an emotional experience. The story is told within one frame, address is much more important than action."

Kabelik structured his illustrated memoir as a three-act drama, evolving from his childhood discovery of photography in the first act to his painful departure from Prague and settling in Canada in the second, followed by the astonishing third, he writes.

"Without any warning we reach Act Three. At first we don't even notice. Then something

significant happens, we see ourselves as we really are and cannot believe the change. Suddenly we are still, weaker and wondering whose life this is that we're living? It isn't what we were dreaming of, nor what we wanted to be."

Kabelik acknowledges in Act Two a comment by an early North American influence—the effective metaphor mentioned at the outset of this piece, who termed his images "niches"—"appears in which objects and intentions are situated, sometimes by accident, sometimes fabricated. The term applies to the content and rectangular form of Kabelik's images, the physical facts of his subject matter, and his unremitted care towards framing them."

For Kabelik, distressingly evoked, a niche is a safe space, protected from winds of socio-political change, though a space to aging. Filmmaking, he explains, entails compromise and accommodation. Still, he more enthusiastically, the niches they construct "reflect my inner need for peace and quiet."

Another kind of stillness suffuses Kabelik's photographs in that they are largely unobscured. A connection with his Czech countryman Josef Sudek is not inappropriate; the older artist's elegant and elegant images find counterparts in Kabelik's. In both, people are scarce and the evidence of human passage is fleeting. Sudek's are accumulating, settling in his quiet and colorless, dimming light and muted sound.

Like Sudek's, Kabelik's images are glowing moments selfed, setting remembered visible, hand-in-hand with the photographer, "were not looking for other things. It's not clear whether something physical has disappeared or if the distance is simply a presence that never materialized."

"I believe that my photographs exist outside of time," Kabelik says, "and therefore they will outlive my film work." The absence of humans affords the images greater longevity, since the niches and their contents acquire only the film, instantaneous veneer of passing life.

—George Havel



Horse in a Stallion

110

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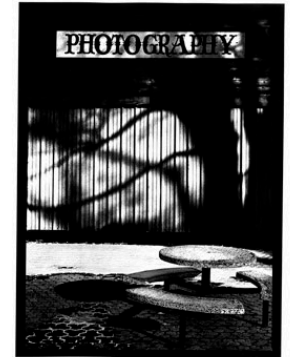
Vladimir Kabelik was featured (article and images) in [Black & White](#) magazine's June 2017 issue.



Boy



Rocking Horse



Photography

110

111



Kabelik in *LensWork* and *LensWork Extended* #59 *Remembering Prague*

When switching from the subject of filmmaking to photography, Kabelik states that he always admired the work of Josef Sudek, "but my friendship with Miroslav Hak has forever cemented my love and understanding of photography."

Back issues of *LensWork Extended* perpetually [available here](#).

